Single JFK Bullet Theory Backed

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Washington — House investigators have developed strong new evidence to support the disputed "single-bullet theory" adopted by the Warren Commission when it concluded that a lone assassin killed President John F. Kennedy, according to a knowledgeable source.

The theory is that the same bullet struck Kennedy in the back, passed through his body, then wounded former Texas Gov. John B. Connally in the back, chest, wrist and thigh.

A scarcely damaged bullet recovered from Connally's stretcher at the Dallas hospital where he was treated was said to be the missile that wounded both men.

Using sophisticated analyses, scientists have determined that metal fragments recovered from Connally's wrist match the bullet found on his stretcher, said the source, who requested anonymity.

A critic of the Warren Commission has said such evidence would strongly support the single-bullet theory.

The House Assassinations Committee, which ordered the tests, was hearing the results today.

The committee also was to question ballistics expert Larry Sturdivan and Dr. Charles S. Petty, chief medical examiner of Dallas County, Tex., and one of nine pathologists who studied the Kennedy autopsy procedures for the committee.

Petty, who was not working in Dallas at the time Kennedy was assassinated there on Nov. 22, 1963, was expected to "confirm and verify and support" many of the pathology findings submitted to the committee yesterday, the source said.

At the committee's direction, scientists subjected the recovered bullet and the wrist fragments to neutron activation analyses, in which solid objects are bombarded with a stream of neutrons, forcing the objects to emit a variety of rays.

The technique has been described as a way of "fingerprinting" objects because no two contain the same elements in precisely the same quantities.

Disputes over the single-bullet theory dominated the testimony yesterday, the second day of the committee's hearings on the Kennedy assassination.

Eight of the nine pathologists concluded that the single-bullet theory was valid, said Dr. Michael Baden, the panel moderator and chief medical examiner of New York City.

The dissenting panelist, Dr. Cyril H. Wecht, argued vehemently that "no bullet could have caused all these wounds" in both Kennedy and Connally.

Wecht, coroner of Allegheny County, Pa., said that abandoning the single-bullet theory would strongly suggest the existence of two gunmen and thus a conspiracy to assassinate Kennedy.

Hinting at the evidence to come, deputy committee counsel Gary Cornwell asked Wecht: "What would be the effect on the single-bullet theory if we could show that (the bullet found on Connally's stretcher) did hit Connally's wrist?"

Wecht conceded that he wrote an article several years ago, asserting that a match of the bullet with the wrist fragments through neutron activation analyses "would lend strong support" to the single-bullet theory.

But he said he is less positive of that assertion now.

Close Vote Seen on Kennedy Probe

Washington — (UPI) — A close House vote is expected next week on whether to put the Assassinations Committee out of business Sept. 15 before it winds up an inquiry into the murders of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and John F. Kennedy.

The House Administration Committee voted 9-8 yesterday in favor of an extra $790,000 for the panel to continue its work until Dec. 31. The inquiry has already cost taxpayers $2.5 million this year.

Many lawmakers have charged the reinvestigations are a waste of money and have turned up no more than was earlier discovered by police, the FBI and the Warren Commission.